Mandarin Companion

Chinese Graded Reader

Level 1 | 300 Characters

盲人国

Mángrén Guó

The Country of the Blind

H.G. Wells

Level 1: 300 Characters

盲人国

Mángrén Guó

The Country of the Blind

Based on

The Country of the Blind

by H.G. Wells

Mind Spark Press LLC

SHANGHAI

Mandarin Companion Graded Readers

Now you can read books in Chinese that are fun and help accelerate language learning. Every book in the Mandarin Companion series is carefully written to use characters, words, and grammar that a learner is likely to know.

The Mandarin Companion Leveling System has been meticulously developed through an in-depth analysis of textbooks, education programs and natural Chinese language. Every story is written in a simple style that is fun and easy to understand so you improve with each book.

Mandarin Companion Level One

Level 1 is intended for Chinese learners at an upper-elementary level. Most learners will be able to approach this book after one to two years of formal study, depending on the learner and program. This series is designed to combine simplicity of characters with an easy-to-understand storyline that helps beginner grow their vocabulary and language comprehension abilities. The more they read, the better they will become at reading and grasping the Chinese language.

Level 1 is designed around the Mandarin Companion's core set of **300 basic characters**. These basic characters ensure that most of the vocabulary will be simple everyday words that the reader is most likely to know. This series contains approximately **400 unique words**; a number low enough to make reading Chinese less intimidating, while also introducing new key words relevant

to the story.

Key words are added gradually over the course of the story. A numbered footnote indicates the first time a new word or character is introduced and the corresponding hyperlink references the glossary with pinyin and an English definition. Each additional instance of a new word is indicated by a hyperlink. All proper nouns have been underlined to help the reader distinguish between names and words.

What level is right for me?

If you are able to read this book with a high level of comprehension, then this book is likely at your level. It is ideal to have at most only one unknown word or character for every 40-50 words or characters that are read.

Once you are able to read fluidly and quickly without interruption you are ready for the next level. Even if you are able to understand all of the words in the book, we recommend that readers build fluidity and reading speed before moving to higher levels.

How will this help my Chinese?

Reading extensively in a language you are learning is one of the most effective ways to build fluency. However, the key is to read at a high level of comprehension. Reading at the appropriate level in Chinese will increase the speed of character recognition, help acquire vocabulary faster, allow readers to naturally learn grammar, and train the brain to think in Chinese. It also makes learning Chinese more fun and enjoyable. Readers will experience the sense of

accomplishment and confidence that only comes from reading entire books in Chinese.

For more information, please see Extensive Reading and Graded Readers

Table of Contents

Story Adaptation Notes

Characters and Locations

1 盲人国

2 那个很远的地方

3 找盲人国

4 这是哪里？

5 这是什么人？

6 两个世界的人

7 什么是“看见”？

8 我错了！

9 眼睛

10 最后的决定

Key Words

Discussion Questions

Extensive Reading and Graded Readers

Credits and Acknowledgements

About Mandarin Companion

Other Stories from Mandarin Companion

Story Adaptation Notes

This story is an adaptation of English sci-fi author H.G. Wells' 1904 classic story, *The Country of the Blind*. This Mandarin Companion graded reader has been adapted into a fully localized Chinese version of the original story. The characters have been given authentic Chinese names as opposed to transliterations of English names, which sound foreign in Chinese. The locations have been adapted to well-known places in China.

The time period of this adaptation is left up to the reader's imagination, but clearly modern technology does not play a role in the story. The original 1904 story and a revised version published in 1939 have different endings. However, this version follows neither original ending exactly, rather giving the story our own twist. We hope you enjoy it.

Character Adaptations

The following is a list of the characters from *The Country of the Blind* in Chinese followed by their corresponding English names from Wells' original story. The names below are not translations, they are new Chinese names used for the Chinese versions of the original characters. Think of them as all-new characters in a Chinese story.

陈方远 (Chén Fāngyuǎn) - Nuñez

江天雨 (Jiāng Tiānyǔ) - Yacob

江雪 (Jiāng Xuě) - Medina-Saroté

Cast of Characters

陈方远
(Chén Fāngyuǎn)

江天雨
(Jiāng Tiānyǔ)

王爷爷
(Wáng Yéye)

江雪
(Jiāng Xuě)

Locations

贵州 Guìzhōu Guizhou Province is in southwest China, between Yunnan and Hunan. Like Yunnan, it is home to many Chinese ethnic minorities, and is also a very mountainous province.

1

盲人国

在贵州的大山里，有一个漂亮[1]的地方。人们听说[2]过那里，但是从来没有[3]去过，所以他们很想知道那个地方的样子[4]。听说，有一条[5]路可以去那个地方，但是很难。如果要去那里，人们需要[6]走过几个大山，然后走过一个长长的山洞[7]。后来[8]，二三十个人带[9]着孩子、一些吃的和他们所有的钱，走了一个月，真的到了那里。那是个漂亮的地方，这几十个人到了那里以后就一直[10]生活[11]在那里，他们都很开心。

很多很多年以后，贵州下了一次大雨，大雨下了一个月。山洞里的路变成[12]了一条河[13]，从那以后[14]，再也没有[15]路去那个漂亮的地方了。山洞里的这条河让贵州变成了两个世界[16]，一个是那个漂亮的地方，一个是山洞外面的世界。

但是在那次大雨以前，有一个老人从那个地方走了出来。外面的人都问他："那个地方怎么样？你为什么从那里出来？"

他想了一下，然后说："这是一个很长的故事[17]。那个地方很漂亮，我们在那里的生活很开心。可是不知道为什么，最近几年，那里的人的眼睛[18]慢慢出现[19]了一些问题。大人们慢慢看不见[20]东西了，所有刚出生的孩子都是盲人[21]。我的眼睛是最好的，也知道出来的路。所以他们给了我所有的钱，希望[22]我能去外面的世界找到一个好办法帮他们。"可是没想到[23]他出来以后，大雨下了一个月，那个山洞里的路变成了一条河，他没有回去的路了。所以他只能忘记[24]那里的老婆[25]、孩子和朋友，在外面的世界里生活。"他们还在等我，可是我回不去[26]了！"想到这些，他难过[27]地哭了。

后来，那个老人的眼睛也慢慢看不见了，不长时间以后，他就死了。人们很快就忘记了他，但是人们记住[28]了他的故事：在贵州的一个大山里，有一个漂亮的地方，那里的人都是盲人。所以现在，外面的人叫那个地方“盲人国”。

Key Words

关键词 *(Guānjiàncí)*

1. **漂亮** piàoliang *adj.* pretty
2. **听说** tīngshuō *v.* to have heard of, to hear talk of
3. **从来没有** cónglái méiyǒu *phrase* to have never (done something)
4. **样子** yàngzi *n.* appearance
5. **条** tiáo *mw.* [a measure word for rivers, roads, and other long, thin things]
6. **需要** xūyào *v.* to need
7. **山洞** shāndòng *n.* cave (lit. "mountain hole")
8. **后来** hòulái *tn.* afterward
9. **带** dài *v.* to carry, to take (a person somewhere to do something)
10. **一直** yīzhí *adv.* all along, continuously
11. **生活** shēnghuó *v.; n.* to live; life
12. **变成** biànchéng *v.* to turn into, to become
13. **河** hé *n.* river

14. 从那以后 cóng nà yǐhòu *phrase* from then on, from that point forward

15. 再也没有 zài yě méiyǒu *phrase* never again (do something), (there was) never again

16. 世界 shìjiè *n.* world

17. 故事 gùshi *n.* story

18. 眼睛 yǎnjing *n.* eyes

19. 出现 chūxiàn *v.* to appear, to emerge

20. 看不见 kànbujiàn *vc.* to be unable to see

21. 盲人 mángrén *n.* blind person

22. 希望 xīwàng *v.* to hope

23. 想到 xiǎngdào *vc.* to think of, to imagine

24. 忘记 wàngjì *v.* to forget

25. 老婆 lǎopo *n.* wife (informal)

26. 回不去 huíbuqù *vc.* to be unable to go back

27. 难过 nánguò *adj.* sad, upset

28. 记住 jìzhu *vc.* to memorize, to remember for the future

29. 告诉 gàosu *v.* to tell

30. 树 shù *n.* tree

31. 雪 xuě *n.* snow

32. 种 zhòng *v.* to plant (a tree)

33. 越来越... yuèláiyuè... *adv.* more and more

34. 差 chà *adj.* of poor quality

35. 草地 cǎodì *n.* grassland, grassy field

36. 可怕 kěpà *adj.* frightening

37. 吃不完 chībuwán *vc.* to be unable to eat all of (some food)

38. 看得见 kàndejiàn *vc.* to be able to see

39. 生 shēng *v.* to give birth to

40. 百 bǎi *num.* hundred

41. 过去 guòqu *vc.* to pass, to pass through

42. 发生 fāshēng *v.* to happen, to occur

43. 有意思 yǒuyìsi *adj.* interesting

44. 国王 guówáng *n.* king

45. 想法 xiǎngfa *n.* way of thinking, idea

46. 决定 juédìng *v.; n.* to decide; decision

47. 为了 wèile *prep.* in order to, for the purpose of

48. 要不 yàobu *conj.* how about... (we do this)

49. 别 bié *adv.* don't (do something)

50. 另外 lìngwài *pron.* another, other

51. 一定 yīdìng *adv.* surely, certainly

52. 石头 shítou *n.* stone, rock

53. 大声 dàshēng *adv.* loudly (lit. "(in a) loud voice")

54. 没用 méiyòng *adj.* to be of no use

55. 醒 xǐng *v.* to awaken

56. 发现 fāxiàn *v.* to discover

57. 想起 xiǎngqǐ *vc.* to recall

58. 站起来 zhànqǐlai *vc.* to stand up

59. 摔 shuāi *v.* to trip and fall

60. 力气 lìqi *n.* strength, energy

61. 睡着 shuìzháo *vc.* to fall asleep

62. 鸟 niǎo *n.* bird

63. 奇怪 qíguài *adj.* strange

64. 窗 chuāng *n.* window

65. 颜色 yánsè *n.* color

66. 一点都 yīdiǎn dōu *phrase* (not) at all

67. 难看 nánkàn *adj.* bad-looking, ugly

68. 睡觉 shuìjiào *vo.* to sleep

69. 生气 shēngqì *adj.; v.* angry; to get angry

70. 耳朵 ěrduo *n.* ear

71. 自信 zìxìn *adj.; n.* self-confident; self-confidence

72. 认真 rènzhēn *adj.* earnest, serious

73. 笑 xiào *v.* to laugh, to smile

74. 抓 zhuā *v.* to grab

75. 摸 mō *v.* to touch, to feel (with the hands)

76. 要不然 yàoburán *conj.* otherwise

77. 没错 méicuò *phrase* no mistake, quite sure

78. 睡醒 shuìxǐng *vc.* to awaken from sleep, to be fully awake

79. 总是 zǒngshì *adv.* always

80. 有用 yǒuyòng *adj.* useful

81. 坐起来 zuòqǐlai *vc.* to sit up

82. 暖和 nuǎnhuo *adj.* warm

83. 睡不着 shuìbuzháo *vc.* to be unable to fall asleep

84. 对...来说 duì... láishuō *phrase* for... (a person)

85. 可笑 kěxiào *adj.* laughable

86. 以为 yǐwéi *v.* to (mistakenly) think that

87. 拿起 náqǐ *vc.* to pick up

88. 放下 fàngxia *vc.* to put down

89. 方向 fāngxiàng *n.* direction

90. 再也不 zài yě bù *phrase* never again

91. 用心 yòngxīn *vo.* to be attentive

92. 机会 jīhuì *n.* opportunity

93. 关心 guānxīn *v.* to be concerned over

95. **再也** zài yě *phrase* (never) again

94. **成为** chéngwéi *v.* to become

96. **看不清** kànbuqīng *vc.* to be unable to see clearly

Part of Speech Key

adj. Adjective

adv. Adverb

aux. Auxiliary Verb

conj. Conjunction

mw. Measure word

n. Noun

num. Numeral

on. Onomatopoeia

part. Particle

pn. Proper noun

tn. Time Noun

v. Verb

vc. Verb plus complement

vo. Verb plus object

Discussion Questions

讨论问题 *(Tǎolùn Wèntí)*

Chapter 1: 盲人国

1. 你觉得盲人国是一个什么样的地方？

2. 你看到过盲人吗？你对盲人有什么想法？

Chapter 2: 那个很远的地方

1. 如果你是一个盲人，你觉得你的生活会怎么样？

2. 盲人国很漂亮，如果很多人都去那里玩，你也会去吗？

Chapter 3: 找盲人国

1. 以前你去别的地方玩的时候，有没有遇到过很难的事？你是怎么做的？

2. 如果陈方远和两个朋友都去了盲人国，他们都想做国王，你觉得会发生什么？

3. 如果只有你知道去盲人国的路，你会不会去？你去了想做什么？

Chapter 4: 这是哪里？

1. 陈方远觉得盲人国跟外面的世界有什么不一样？

2. 如果你明天睡醒以后，发现自己在盲人国，你会做什么？

3. 你更喜欢一直住在自己知道的地方，还是喜欢去一个新的地方？为什么？

Chapter 5: 这是什么人？

1. 在盲人国，盲人们不懂哪些词？为什么？

2. 如果你在盲人国，你会怎么告诉盲人什么是“看见”“颜色”？

3. 你或你的朋友以前摔在地上过吗？有没有一些让你不好意思的事发生过？说一说这些好笑的事。

4. 如果你的家人和朋友都不理解你的想法和做法，你会觉得怎么样？

Chapter 6: 两个世界的人

1. 以前你学汉语的时候，是不是像陈方远一样，你跟中国人说汉语，他们听不懂你在说什么？说一说你的故事。

2. 有没有人觉得你现在还是一个孩子？如果有，你会怎么做？

3. 盲人们对陈方远有什么看法？说一说所有的看法。

4. 你是不是很喜欢不同的文化？说一说你知道的不同国家的文化。

Chapter 7:什么是“看见”？

1. 眼睛会让人们看到所有漂亮的东西，但是你觉得眼睛会带来什么不好的事吗？为什么？

2. 你觉得国家应该怎么帮助那些看不见或听不见的人？

3. 你觉得盲人国的人需要我们帮他们吗？你想去帮他们吗？

Chapter 8: 我错了！

1. 如果陈方远真的做了盲人国的国王，你觉得盲人国会怎么样？

2. 你小时候有没有打过别人，或做过一些不好的事？请说一说。

3. 你觉得是什么让陈方远跟刚来盲人国的时候不一样了？

Chapter 9: 眼睛

1. 你觉得陈方远和江雪应该在一起吗？为什么？

2. 在中国，如果男人想要和女人在一起，父母的看法对他们很重要，这个问题你怎么看？

3. 如果你是陈方远，你很爱江雪，但是也想要眼睛，你会怎么做？

Chapter 10: 最后的决定

1. 如果陈方远真的不要眼睛，和江雪在一起生活，你觉得会怎么样？

2. 如果江雪跟陈方远去了外面的世界，她的生活会怎么

样？

3. 你觉得陈方远回到家以后，会发生什么事？

4. 你觉得陈方远会不会再去盲人国？为什么？

5. 看完了这个故事，你有什么想法？

Extensive Reading

After years of studying Chinese, many people ask, “why can’t I become fluent in Chinese?” Fluency can only happen when the language enters our “comfort zone.” This comfort comes after significant exposure to and experience with the language. The more times you meet a word, phrase, or grammar point the more readily it will enter your comfort zone.

In the world of language research, experts agree that learners can acquire new vocabulary through reading only if the overall text can be understood. Decades of research indicate that if we know approximately 98% of the words in a book, we can comfortably “pick up” the 2% that is unfamiliar. Reading at this 98% comprehension level is referred to as “extensive reading.”

Research in extensive reading has shown that it accelerates vocabulary learning and helps the learner to naturally understand grammar. Perhaps most importantly, it trains the brain to automatically recognize familiar language, thereby freeing up mental energy to focus on meaning and ideas. As they build reading speed and fluency, learners will move from reading “word by word” to processing “chunks of language.” A defining feature is that it’s less *painful* than the “intensive reading” commonly used in textbooks. In fact, extensive reading can be downright fun.

Graded Readers

Graded readers are the best books for learners to “extensively” read. Research

has taught us that learners need to “encounter” a word 10-30 times before truly learning it, and often many more times for particularly complicated or abstract words. Graded readers are appropriate for learners because the language is controlled and simplified, as opposed to the language in native texts, which is inevitably difficult and often demotivating. Reading extensively with graded readers allows learners to bring together all of the language they have studied and absorb how the words naturally work together.

To become fluent, learners must not only understand the meaning of a word, but also understand its nuances, how to use it in conversation, how to pair it with other words, where it fits into natural word order, and how it is used in grammar structures. No textbook could ever be written to teach all of this explicitly. When used properly, a textbook introduces the language and provides the basic meanings, while graded readers *consolidate*, *strengthen*, and *deepen understanding*.

Without graded readers, learners would have to study dictionaries, textbooks, sample dialogs, and simple conversations until they have randomly encountered enough Chinese for it to enter their comfort zones. With proper use of graded readers, learners can tackle this issue and develop greater fluency *now*, at their *current* levels, instead of waiting until some period in the distant future. With a stronger foundation and greater confidence at their current levels, learners are encouraged and motivated to continue their Chinese studies to even greater heights. Plus, they’ll quickly learn that reading Chinese is fun!

Credits

Original Author: H.G. Wells

Series Editor: John Pasden

Lead Writer: Yang Renjun

Content Editor: Yu Cui

Proofreader: Zhang Pei

Illustrator: Hu Shen

Producer: Jared Turner

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to Yang Renjun, Yu Cui, Song Shen and the entire team at AllSet Learning for working on this project and contributing the perfect mix of talent to produce this series.

Thank you to our enthusiastic testers, Logan Pauley, Ashlyn Weber, Michelle Helding Birkenfeldt, Vanessa Dewey, and Ariel Bowman. Thank you to Judy Yang who helped with our cover and book design.

A special thanks to Rob Waring, to whom we refer as the "godfather of extensive reading" for his encouragement, expert advice, and support with this project.

Thank you to Heather Turner for being the inspiration behind the entire series and never wavering in her belief. Thank you to Song Shen for supporting us, handling all the small thankless tasks, and spurring us forward if we dared to fall behind.

Moreover, we will be forever grateful for Yuehua Liu and Chengzhi Chu for pioneering the first graded readers in Chinese and to whom we owe a debt of gratitude for their years of tireless work to bring these type of materials to the Chinese learning community.

About Mandarin Companion

Mandarin Companion was started by Jared Turner and John Pasden who met one fateful day on a bus in Shanghai when the only remaining seat left them sitting next to each other. A year later, Jared had greatly improved his Chinese using extensive reading but was frustrated at the lack of suitable reading materials. He approached John with the prospect of creating their own series. Having worked in Chinese education for nearly a decade, John was intrigued with the idea and thus began the Mandarin Companion series.

John majored in Japanese in college, but started learning Mandarin and later moved to China where his learning accelerated. After developing language proficiency, he was admitted into an all-Chinese masters program in applied linguistics at East China Normal University in Shanghai. Throughout his learning process, John developed an open mind to different learning styles and a tendency to challenge conventional wisdom in the field of teaching Chinese. He has since worked at ChinesePod as academic director and host, and opened his own consultancy, AllSet Learning, in Shanghai to help individuals acquire Chinese language proficiency. He lives in Shanghai with his wife and children.

After graduate school and with no Chinese language skills, Jared decided to move to China with his young family in search of career opportunities. Later while working on an investment project, Jared learned about extensive reading and decided that if it was as effective as it claimed to be, it could help him learn Chinese. In three months, he read 10 Chinese graded readers and his language ability quickly improved from speaking words and phrases to a conversational level. Jared has an MBA from Purdue University and a bachelor in Economics

from the University of Utah. He lives in Shanghai with his wife and children.

Other Stories from Mandarin Companion

Level 1 Readers: 300 Characters

The Secret Garden《秘密花园》

by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Li Ye (Mary Lennox) grew up without the love and affection of her parents. After an epidemic leaves her an orphan, Li Ye is sent off to live with her reclusive uncle in his sprawling estate in Nanjing. She learns of a secret garden where no one has set foot in ten years. Li Ye finds the garden and slowly discovers the secrets of the manor. With the help of new friends, she brings the garden back to life and learns the healing power of friendship and love.

Sherlock Holmes and the Curly Haired Company《卷发公司的案子》

Based on "Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Red-Headed League" by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Mr. Xie was recently hired by the Curly Haired Company. For a significant weekly allowance, he was required to sit in an office and copy articles from a book, while in the meantime his assistant looked after his shop. He had

answered an advertisement in the paper and although hundreds of people applied, he was the only one selected because of his very curly hair. When the company unexpectedly closes, Mr. Xie visits Gao Ming (Sherlock Holmes) with his strange story. Gao Ming is certain something is not right, but will he solve the mystery in time?

The Monkey's Paw《猴爪》

by W.W. Jacobs

Mr. and Mrs. Zhang live with their grown son Guisheng who works at a factory. One day an old friend of Mr. Zhang comes to visit the family after having spent years traveling in the mysterious hills of China's Yunnan Province. He tells the Zhang family of a monkey's paw that has magical powers to grant three wishes to the holder. Against his better judgement, he reluctantly gives the monkey paw to the Zhang family, along with a warning that the wishes come with a great price for trying to change ones fate…

The Sixty-Year Dream《六十年的梦》

Based on "Rip Van Winkle" by Washington Irving

Zhou Xuefa (Rip Van Winkle) is well loved by everyone in his town, everyone except his nagging wife. With his faithful dog Blackie, Zhou Xuefa spends his time playing with kids, helping neighbors, and discussing politics in the teahouse. One day after a bad scolding from his wife, he goes for a walk into the mountains and meets a mysterious old man who appears to be

from an ancient time. The man invites him into his mountain home for a meal and after drinking some wine, Zhou Xuefa falls into a deep sleep. He awakes to a time very different than what he once knew.

Mandarin companion is producing a growing library of graded readers for Chinese language learners. For the newest releases, visit www.MandarinCompanion.com

Mandarin Companion is a trademark of Mind Spark Press LLC.

www.MandarinCompanion.com

Design and Illustrations contained herein are © Mind Spark Press 2013.

First published 2013. 3rd revision January, 2015.

All rights are held by Mind Spark Press LLC.

ISBN 978-0-9910052-3-9

All rights reserved; no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publishers.